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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING MATTERS

Newsletter of ENSEC (European Network on Social and Emotional Competence)
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Welcome!

On behalf of my four co-chairs, our founding chairs, and myself I would like to welcome you to the 15th issue of the ENSEC newsletter.

As the **board of chairs**, we look at this issue with a smile in one eye and a tear in the other. Having volunteered for the last up to six years (for some of us), it is time to step down and give room for new volunteers with innovative ideas. Those with interest in taking on one of the positions can be assured that we are happy to provide guidance and support to you in transitioning into the new roles as chairs. Please find more details on the procedure of call for expression of interest becoming an ENSEC chair in this issue.

At the ENSEC 2017 conference:

Find a review of the highlights from this year's conference!

Power points of oral presentations were uploaded to the website of the Centre for Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health with thanks to our founder Carmel Cefai, and can be downloaded from: https://www.um.edu.mt/cres/ensec_2017_conference

A major part of this issue are **voices** of some of our members who agreed to gather the thoughts raised during our bi-annual members meeting which was held on 9 June 2017 during the ENSEC conference in Stockholm. Despite the short time frame our meeting was held, members demonstrated an immense interest in future tasks of ENSEC.

Several members have been busy collaborating. Check out the **news of members!**

We would appreciate your comments on the matters discussed in this newsletter, please bearing in mind that the work of ENSEC is being done by chairs who are all volunteers, and on top of busy jobs.

We would love some interesting features for the next edition. Please send any contributions to me (Carmen_huser@web.de) as a Word document so that it can be cut and pasted – no logos please. We have started to accept longer features to share richer, detailed knowledge throughout the network. However, this is a newsletter and not a journal – so no long academic papers accepted!

Do not forget to follow us on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/enseceurope/> to keep up to date, and regularly check our website: <http://enseceurope.org/>

Thank you!

NEWS FROM THE ENSEC BOARD OF CHAIRS

CALL FOR NEW ENSEC CHAIRS

We are inviting members of ENSEC to apply to become Chairs since the current Chairs are due to step down in the near future.

As a team, the Chairs collaborate to uphold the principles and philosophy of ENSEC. They have regular Skype meetings to discuss research and practice in the field of social and emotional competence among children and young people. Each one is actively engaged in deepening and disseminating ideas and findings about social and emotional development whether as a facilitator, teacher, researcher, writer or practitioner. Collectively, the ENSEC Chairs have wide experience of forming networks, collaborating on research projects, developing programmes for teachers and other professionals, running workshops, organising conferences and writing or editing articles, chapters and books.

At present, individual Chairs take responsibility for the following aspects:

- Editing the ENSEC Newsletter;
- Organising the ENSEC conference;
- Facilitating research and grant applications;
- Coordinating online membership;
- Updating the website.

We are always mindful of the wide knowledge and expertise of our membership and welcome this opportunity to bring fresh ideas and new areas of responsibility to the Chairs' group. To date, Chairs have come from Croatia, Germany, Malta, Portugal and U.K. We aim to continue to represent a range of European countries as this widens our networks and enriches our capacity to disseminate our ideas internationally.

We invite you, therefore, if you would like to take up this challenge, to submit your CV and a letter of application in which you state the following:

- Your particular area of expertise;
- Your contribution to ENSEC in general;
- The particular role as an ENSEC Chair that you would like to adopt and why you consider that your contribution would be of benefit.

Please send your application to Carmen Huser (carmen_huser@web.de) by 31st October 2017.

6th ENSEC Conference 2017, Sweden: Diversity

The bi-annual ENSEC conference was held on 7-9 June 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden, and Helsinki, Finland, this year – cruising ‘like Vikings’ in the Baltic Sea.



Despite the incredible experience of presenting on a cruise ship while we could watch through the windows how the gorgeous landscape of the sea passed by, keynotes, presentations in symposia and posters offered insight into research and practice around social-emotional education recognizing diversity among children and young people. In the light of the conference's theme ‘diversity’, the stories at the opening could have not been better chosen to reflect current societal challenges: two

young refugees told their experiences and reminded the audience about the importance of feeling safe and belonging.

160 conference delegates from 32 countries participated in the three-day event and brought their own diversity to the table and contributed to the conference's success. The presentations were thought-provoking and inspiring. Many of the presenters sent their slides which can be found online:

https://www.um.edu.mt/cres/ensec_2017_conference.



Among the fabulous keynote speakers, Dan Olw us received the award for ‘a lifetime of service to children's health and wellbeing’ through the Centre for Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health, University of Malta





In September 2017 Paul Cooper was given the ENSEC Lifetime Achievement Award which is presented every two years at the conference. On this occasion, as Paul could not attend the conference, he was given his award in Leicester by two of the ENSEC chairs, Kathy Evans and Helen Cowie who complimented him on his outstanding contribution to the field of children's emotional health and well-being.

Beside the well-known and eminently respectable keynote speakers and academic 'rockstars' of social-emotional research, the conference put the spotlight on the newcomers and early career researchers. Timo Schreiner won the award of 'best poster' covering wonderfully both key components in the competition: presentation and novelty.



The ENSEC board of chairs would like to say thank you again to our fantastic organizing conference team, including Birgitta Kimber, Siggí Olafsson, and Therése Skoog, as well as to those in the background, the scientific committee, and staff of the Vikings cruise – and of course all delegates who made this conference an unforgettable experience.

If you wish to refresh the memories, go to the conference's social media site: <https://www.facebook.com/6th-ENSEC-Conference-1652128328434266/> and check out the videos, photographs and stories.

VOICES FROM THE MEMBERS MEETING: FUTURE TASKS FOR ENSEC?!

At the bi-annual members meeting held on 9 June 2017 during the ENSEC conference in Stockholm, members discussed the future tasks and ambitions of ENSEC.

Issues raised were, for one thing, to strengthen the link to practice, for example to show more best practice examples at the conferences, and encouraging practitioners to present at future ENSEC conferences. Our chair Renata Miljevic-Ridicki brought along around 25 educators from Croatia who were involved in the research project „RESCUR in kindergarten“ to this year’s conference, and these educators presented their work and practical implementation as well as their reflections of the project in a joint research symposium. We would like to encourage any practitioner to consider presenting, and any researcher to invite their collaborators working in practice to share their expertise.

For another thing, one question arose how ENSEC can have a (greater) impact on policy and influence on practice. Please read members’ voices concerning this use further on.

Further ideas included to share more school experiences around SEL, more EU-funded project collaborations, and founding of Special Interest Groups (SIG).

LEARNING TO BE AND LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER: A 2017 UPDATE

Authored by Sue Roffey

Learning to Be and *Learning to Live Together* are two of the four pillars of education famously included in the Delors Report for UNESCO in 1996 *. The others are *Learning to Know* and *Learning to Do* – the substance of the academic curriculum. Although this report was published over twenty years ago it is more relevant now than ever. Although many are doing OK we have seen a rise in racism across Europe and elsewhere, there is a well- documented increase in mental health concerns for young people, and relationships both at work and at home are often toxic rather than healthy and supportive.

And yet in many schools social and emotional learning (SEL) is being left to the hidden curriculum as academic ‘excellence’ takes precedence. Children are often *learning to be* and *learning to live together* from the models they see in the media, (including porn sites) from families who may be struggling at best, dysfunctional at

worst and from a political zeitgeist that promotes the myth that economic success is what matters most in life and increasingly looks to blame others for social ills. An education that enables young people to authentically flourish, think well of themselves and others and have the skills to interact effectively is more critical now than ever.

ENSEC is one of the few organisations focused exclusively on these pillars of education. Unlike CASEL it does not have its own researchers and funds to further its objectives but it does have a membership who care deeply about these issues. How can we become more of a voice for the promotion of social and emotional learning across all sectors of education? How can we influence policy and practice beyond the individual or even the individual school? The work of several speakers in the last conference made a significant difference over the years to how society perceives and responds to bullying and this is to be applauded. But where are we going now? Several members are continuing to do important work, write powerful books and contribute to the conversation on SEL but how might ENSEC itself raise the bar on our influence at the wider level? How might we reach out to the public, to employers and to governments as a united European voice pressing for SEL to have higher priority in education? Wellbeing in education is a concept on the rise. Now would seem a good time to ask the question.

*Delors, J. (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within*. Paris: International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century, UNESCO.

SPREADING SEL AROUND THE WORLD: IS IT ALSO A MATTER OF POLITICS?

Authored by Davide Antognazza

During the members meeting in Stockholm we have discussed about the impact of SEL on politics.

After ten years of working and researching on the importance of social and emotional learning for the development of our children, all of us are more than persuaded that SEL skills can make a difference in children's life. However, it is also clear that, while more and more people are joining the ENSEC, our real and concrete impact on school and in any educational context could and should be much more effective.

Starting from here, we believe we have the potential to positively affect the educational landscape, but to do this we need to inoculate our ideas in fields other than ours, getting directly in touch with politicians, stakeholders, decision makers, that is those who practically have the possibilities to make our ideas becoming real for all.

In order to do this, the ENSEC need not only to strengthen its existing connections, but to be assertive in a different way, getting more involved with, for example, the EU, UNESCO, UNICEF and, probably, invests some resources on this topic – all in being aware of lack of resources. ENSEC Chairs have worked in a voluntary capacity, as well as efforts of ENSEC members are done in their short spare free time.

The board is open to any advices, ideas, local and international expertise that could be dedicated to this fundamental issue.

NEWS FROM ENSEC MEMBERS

COST ACTION PROPOSAL “WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS: CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES FOR TRANSFORMING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE”

At the beginning of the September, more than 50 researchers and experts coming from 22 countries answered the ENSEC call aimed at setting up an interdisciplinary and international network to apply for a COST Action (<http://www.cost.eu>) targeted on promoting wellbeing and mental health at schools.

The COST Action proposal, titled “**Wellbeing in Schools: Cross-Cultural Perspectives for Transforming Research into Practice (WISH)**”, was launched by Prof. Ilaria Grazzani and Dr. Valeria Cavioni from the Lab for Developmental and Educational Studies in Psychology at the Bicocca University in Milan, Italy (<https://www.labpse.it/en/>). The Action aims to share, across numerous countries, knowledge and practices related to services, policies, legislation, plans, strategies and programs to protect and promote the psychological wellbeing and mental health of children and young people at school. Furthermore, it will address the question of how research on mental health promotion can be transformed into effective practice in schools across different cultural contexts.

Reply to the proposal will be provided by December 2017.

WISH recognizes the essential role of prevention and mental health promotion in achieving health for all citizens, starting from children and young people at school. It provides a clear answer to the urgent need for a comprehensive, coordinated response from health, education, psychology and social sectors at national and international levels.

For further information on the WISH Action proposal please contact:

Ilaria Grazzani mail: ilaria.grazzani@unimib.it

Valeria Cavioni valeria.cavioni@unimib.it

EUROPEAN PROJECT ON EVIDENCE-BASED SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND INCLUSION

“Evidence-Based Education: European Strategic Model for School Inclusion” (EBE-EUSMOSI)

(Ref. no: 2014-1-IT02-KA201-003578 - ERASMUS PLUS –K/2: Strategic Partnership for Schools)

On June 27th 2017, the Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR), hosted the final conference of the European project **Evidence-Based Education: European Strategic Model for School Inclusion (EBE-EUSMOSI)**.

The project, funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus Plus program and coordinated by University of Perugia, has seen the involvement of 5 European countries represented by University of Perugia (prof. Annalisa Morganti), University of Udine (prof. Lucio Cottini), Zagreb University (prof. Anamarija Žic Ralić), the Open University of the Netherlands (prof. Christian Stracke), Autonomous University of Barcelona (prof. Robert Roche) and University of Ljubljana (prof. Darja Zorc Maver); many of the project partners are also ENSEC members.

The event, moderated by Dr. Raffaele Ciambrone, General Director for student, integration and participation – MIUR, has seen the participation of many keynote speakers such as Dr. Verity Donnelly from the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education who introduced the conference speaking about the European perspectives on Inclusion.

The EBE_EUSMOSI project, which lasted three years (2014-2017) and was aimed at primary school students (8-9 years of age), has combined two relevant concepts, such as Evidence-Based Education, i.e. education based on objective data obtained through experimental research, and school inclusion. The aim was to identify and integrate those research procedures able to provide evidence for what concerns the efficacy of educational programs for the full inclusion of all learners – while, at the same time, closely following the principles of the theoretical – practical framework based on:

- a) the efficacy of interventions: “What works?”;
- b) the effects produced by the interventions: “When does it work and for whom?”;
- c) the ways of implementation: “How can we make it work?” “Is it working?” (Cottini & Morganti, 2015).

The research model of the EBE-EUSMOSI project has been designed with the purpose of answering the following questions:

1. How to assess the quality of school inclusion?
2. An inclusive school is also an effective school?

3. How to improve the quality of school inclusion?

To answer the last question, the Universities of Perugia and Barcelona, carried out a randomized study during the school year 2015-2016, with specific training for teachers and specific classroom work (for a total of 38 classes involved), joining together two frameworks: the Social Emotional Learning one and the Prosociality one. Particularly, the work with the children was aimed at knowing how much can SEL and Prosociality can affect school inclusion. A total of 1.300 pupils was involved. To gather the data, it has been developed and validated a tool for assessing the inclusive process pertaining to school contexts called “Inclusive Process Assessment Scale” (Cottini, et al., 2016). The Scale, which is the outcome of the joined work of the authors, sets itself both as an assessing and self-assessing tool, useful for allowing on one hand specific types of evaluation and, on the other, promoting thoughts on inclusive education’s quality indicators, thus contributing to the planning and ongoing adjustment of the educational project of the school and the class. The tool, in its computer version as well, allows for the planning of researches that can collect evidences supporting the full inclusion organization of Italian schools.

The instrument is available at:

<http://www.fupress.net/index.php/formare/article/view/18512>

In the Italian and Spanish contexts, the level of inclusion found through the use of the Scale, showed an improvement between the pre-test and post-test, especially for what concerns the teaching – learning dimension – thus, for those inclusive processes that concern the classroom context (not the school context).

Further research is needed to investigate the many variables that compose the inclusive process, but the good results obtained by the research will allow for more in-depth studies, focusing the attention on the importance of the role of social emotional learning and prosociality for building competences, in teachers and learners, aimed at improving the quality of school inclusion.



The project Coordinator, Annalisa Morganti, with Robert Roche, Christian Stracke, Raffaele Ciambrone of MIUR (Italian Ministry of Education, Research and University) and some teachers involved in the project during the final conference in Rome, 27th of June 2017

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**ERASMUS+ FUNDED PROJECT:
LEARNING TO BE: DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICES AND METHODOLOGIES
FOR ASSESSING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND HEALTH SKILLS WITHIN
EDUCATION SYSTEMS**



**Learning
to be**

Development of Practices and
Methodologies for Assessing Social
Emotional and Health Skills within
Education Systems



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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European Policy Experimentation project conducted under Erasmus+ Key Action3 programme of the European Union

Critical issues in the field of education are related to Europe's low level of socioemotional competences and high rates of early school leavers. These reasons have negative influence on the social, academic and professional lives of the young people and hamper their personal fulfilment. Looking from the global perspective, these factors prevent the economic growth and social cohesion in Europe. The individuals with a balanced set of cognitive as well as Social, Emotional and Health (SEH) skills are more likely to cope with the difficult situations in life, perform well in the labour market, and achieve personal and professional goals (OECD, 2015, Paris). Even though most National curricula frameworks have underlined the importance of SEH skills in education there has been a lack of understanding on how to assess SEH skills in a proper way and how to integrate SEH assessment methodologies into the existing education practices. With this policy measure we are proposing to widen the set of skills to be assessed and recognized in formal and non-formal education settings for the variety of purposes including school and university admission, career prospects and for the implementation of other social roles.

Therefore, the „Learning to Be“ project, that is Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (MANDATORY LINE), aims to contribute to the better understanding of SEH skills assessment and learning in European schools.

Specifically it is intended to achieve the following goals:

- 1) To develop a SEH assessment model for SEH skills that could be used as a reference tool by educators and policy makers;
- 2) To test a set of assessment tools and methods in practice during a school year (2018-2019) in selected schools in 5 European countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Italy and Spain). The proposed assessment methods will help educators assess SEH skills and plan further learning and teaching in the classroom. The tools will facilitate the recognition of SEH skills within the education system. More precisely, they would form basis for further development of education policies and practices in National curricula, improve the quality of SEH skills education and help foster social cohesion and fundamental values of democratic society.

The project consortium consists of 9 European organizations located in 7 countries working in the fields of Education and Research:

- Lithuanian Children and Youth Centre (Project coordinator, Lithuania);
- Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (Lithuania)
- University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education (Finland);
- National Education Centre (Latvia);
- Institut „Utrip“ (Slovenia);
- University of Milano-Bicocca, Department of Human Sciences for Education (Italy);
- University Loyola Andaluca (Spain);
- Universitas cooperativa de ensino superior e investigacao cientifica (Portugal)
- Social and Emotional Learning Institute (Lithuania).

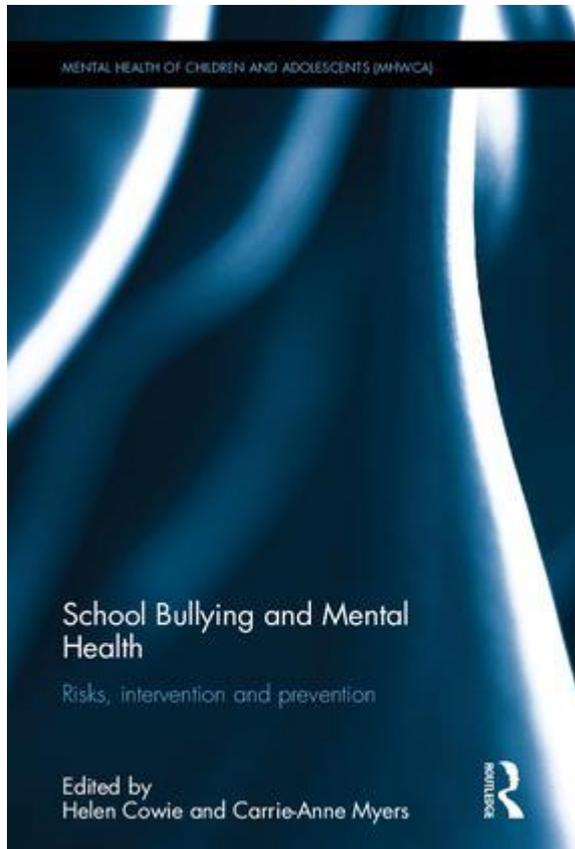
Currently, the international project team is working on developing the proposed assessment methodologies that will be later introduced to selected schools and tested in practice during the next school year.

If you are interested to learn more about the project actions please contact the project coordinator, Tomas Rakovas, at Lithuanian Children and Youth Centre (tomas.rakovas@lvjc.lt).

Follow the project results and news on Erasmus+ projects results portal:

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/f102a588-f796-41f6-acac-3a8c0db5d2c1>

PUBLICATIONS



Helen Cowie (ENSEC Chair) and Carrie-Anne Myers (Country Co-ordinator, UK) have recently published a new book "School Bullying and Mental Health: Risks, Intervention and Prevention". It is the lead book in the Mental Health and Well-Being of Children and Adolescents series published by Routledge.

Based around five core themes: 1, The nature of bullying; 2, The interface between bullying and crime; 3, Bullying: its impact on emotional health and well-being; 4, The social and cultural contexts which challenge or promote school bullying; 5, Effective interventions and policies to counteract school bullying, the book collates current research evidence, policies and theoretical perspectives about bullying in one comprehensive volume. It identifies the nature and extent of bullying and cyberbullying amongst children and young people and considers its impact on their emotional health and well-being. Featuring a number of international contributions, many of the authors are members of ENSEC, this book explores current interventions and solutions to prevent and reduce bullying and to alleviate its negative effects on the mental health of children and young people.

There will be an official launch for the volume which will be announced to the ENSEC membership.